FWIS 163: Medical Humanities
Spring 2017
MWF 2:00-2:50pm
Herzstein Hall 211

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Course Description
What can the humanities teach us about medicine, illness, and health care? What does the term "medical humanities" actually *mean*? And, most importantly, why does the work in this field matter? This writing-intensive course will explore these questions, offering an introduction to the medical humanities and the broad variety of work done in this field. By taking this course, students will be able to formulate their own definition of "medical humanities," while also applying some of the field's theories and ways of knowing to come to a deeper understanding of the complexity of illness and the practice of medicine. We'll examine how both illness and medicine go beyond biomedical symptoms, diagnoses, and treatment; consider the ways in which both doctors and patients can be dehumanized by illness and the practice of medicine; analyze medical-themed short stories, film, poetry and other cultural works; examine classic and recently published medical humanities texts; and reflect on the issues in this field through our own personal experiences and observations. In doing all this, we'll work to develop a sense of how the medical humanities can offer meaningful insights not just to future physicians but to anyone who grapples with the experience of being human.

Content Learning Goals
By taking this course, students will be able to:

- Clearly define the term "medical humanities" and explain the cultural, academic, and medical origins of this field
- Familiarize themselves with the broad range of research conducted in the medical humanities
- Delineate the difference between illness and disease and ways in which an ill person's suffering can extend beyond physical symptoms
- Recognize and articulate the personal and individual aspects of illness and the various ways in which patients and doctors can be humanized or dehumanized by illness and the practice of medicine
- Explain and analyze the difference between "premodern," "modern," and "postmodern" medicine
- Develop an awareness of the role narrative plays in medicine and illness
- Analyze medical-themed fiction and draw conclusions about what these works suggest about medicine or illness
- Analyze portrayals of medicine and illness in popular culture and develop arguments about how these portrayals shape our conception of what it means to be ill or to practice medicine
- Demonstrate an understanding of how work in the medical humanities can influence medical education, the practice of medicine, and the lives of the ill

Communication Learning Goals
Although the central questions of this course will focus on issues in the medical humanities, the central goal is to use this topic as a vehicle to help you build the essential reading, writing, critical thinking, and visual and oral communication skills you'll need in order to be successful in the rest of your academic career and beyond. We'll place particular emphasis on the writing process and the act of writing itself as a method of inquiry, a vehicle for joining cultural and academic conversations, and a way to clarify, develop, and challenge our own thoughts. By taking this course, students will:

- Enhance their understanding of the central place of writing and communication in the learning process and in academic life.
- Learn strategies for analyzing, synthesizing, and responding to college level readings.
- Improve their ability to communicate correctly and effectively in writing and in speech, taking into account audience and purpose.
- Become comfortable with writing as a process and learn strategies—for instance, prewriting, outlining, and revision—for working through that process.
- Learn appropriate use of the work of others, and, where necessary, specific practices of citation.
- Learn to articulate oral arguments and to respond productively to arguments of others in formal presentations and class discussions.

Assignments and Grading
The semester will begin with an ungraded diagnostic assignment, in which you'll write a paragraph-long summary of an influential early medical humanities article. The first graded assignment will require you to write your own one page definition of "medical humanities." For the second graded assignment you'll write an essay that uses Arthur W. Frank's *The Wounded Storyteller* as a theoretical lens to help you analyze a medical-themed story, using Frank's theories and the story to offer insight into the practice of medicine or the experience of illness in general. The third graded assignment will be a research paper analyzing a work of art and medical humanities scholarly responses to that work. The final graded assignment will be a personal essay that draws on your own experiences or observations as well as outside sources as a way to reflect on what you've learned over the course of the semester.

In addition to these major assignments (and the process work leading up to each final draft), you'll be submitting a number of Reading Responses, in which you'll respond to the course readings, sharing your thoughts about each reading with myself and your classmates in informal letters via Canvas. You'll also be required to give a number of presentations, both formal and informal, individually and as part of a group. These assignments will give you an opportunity to develop a skill that is crucial for academic success: the ability to make clear, engaging, and convincing oral and visual presentations.

Assignments	Overall Grade Percentage
Reading Responses	5%
Oral Presentations	10%
Summary of academic article	10%
Essay #1 (Letter explaining human side of medicine)	15%
Essay #2 (Literary analysis lens essay)	25%
Essay #3 (Medical humanities research paper)	25%
Essay #4 (Personal essay/narrative reflection)	10%

Grading Scale

A+ = 100-98	A = 97-93	A- = 92-90
B+ = 89-88	B = 87-83	B- = 82-80
C+ = 79-78	C = 77-73	C- = 72-70
D+ = 69-68	D = 67-63	D- = 62-60
F = 59-0		

Note: I round up on overall averages of .5 or above.

Also note: Unlike many other Rice courses, FWIS courses are not eligible for the Pass/Fail option. Furthermore, FWIS courses may not be dropped after the second week of classes, except with special approval by the administration.

Course Materials

You will need to purchase the following book:

- Arthur W. Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller*, University of Chicago Press, 2nd edition

You're also encouraged to purchase the following book as well, though they aren't required:

- Graff and Birkenstein, *They Say/I Say*, Norton, 3rd edition

These books are all available for purchase online. The rest of the course readings will be available as PDFs on Canvas. It is your responsibility to print out and annotate each course reading before arriving to that day's class, or to bring an annotated e-copy to class via laptop or tablet.

Reading Responses

Approximately once a week, you'll submit a Reading Response on the discussion forum for our course on Canvas. These responses will take the form of a relatively brief and conversational letter to me and/or your classmates about the reading assignment. Reading Responses are due by **noon** on the day of class, though I recommend you complete them well in advance of that deadline. Late responses will not be accepted. I'll try to post each Reading Response assignment by 5pm of the previous class day. (Feel free to email me if you notice I haven't posted it by that time.) Reading responses are informal, low-stakes writing tasks meant to generate thought and conversation about our course readings; all completed reading responses will receive a 100. Reading responses that are incomplete—either because they don't meet all the requirements of the assignment or because they don't demonstrate that you read the entire text carefully—will receive a 50. **At the end of the semester, I do drop your two lowest reading response grades.** One more important note: Reading Responses and all assignments for this course (including essays) are due by the required time and date whether you attend class or not.

Essay Submission and Grading

During the process of writing each essay, you'll be required to submit pre-writing and rough drafts online via Canvas. All rough drafts and prewriting will be due by noon on the required due date. At the end of the revision process for each essay, you will submit a final draft via Canvas. All final drafts must be submitted by the date and time listed on the course calendar, unless you and I have spoken and agreed in advance to an alternate submission time or date. (I'm fairly flexible about due dates with students who approach me about an alternate due well in advance of the scheduled due date.)

I'll typically return your graded essay during a one-on-one meeting outside of class, while you're working on your next paper. You'll have a chance to address my comments and revise/edit the essay to add up to half a letter grade (5 points) on that assignment. You will have this opportunity for all of your graded essays, and these revisions will be due at 5pm on the last day of finals. Students who failed to turn in process work/rough drafts for a particular assignment are not eligible to revise that assignment for a new grade. If you have submitted all your process work and plan to submit a rewrite, I strongly encourage you to meet with me outside of class at some point to discuss my comments on your essay and your plans for revising the essay.

Honor Code
One of the purposes of FWIS is to help new students understand the Rice Honor Code and, more explicitly, to teach students the rules of paraphrasing and scholarly attribution, and the appropriate uses of different types of evidence. Accordingly, FWIS instructors will take an educational approach to transgressions of these rules and respond to errors in these areas foremost as issues for grading and opportunities to correct errors, rather than as instances of academic dishonesty. At the same time, all FWIS instructors retain the authority to treat instances of repeat or egregious violations as matters for the attention of the Rice Honor Council. In this course, students are expected to do the actual writing of their assignments on their own, with no outside help from anyone else. However, students are strongly encouraged (and will sometimes be required) to collaborate on all other aspects of their coursework; including discussing assignments, reading each other's work, and making suggestions for editing and revision.

Disabilities
Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments or accommodations should speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Additionally, students with disabilities will need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.

Absences
Attending each meeting of this course will be integral to your development as a writer and communicator. Class meetings will offer you a chance to develop and clarify ideas for papers, revise and edit your work, and receive feedback from your professor and your peers. **Students who miss more than 3 class meetings (except for official, documented participation in university events) may be docked 10 points—the equivalent of one letter grade—on their final average at my discretion.** With the exception of official university events and extreme, documented circumstances, there are no excused absences. Make sure you don't miss more than 3 days over the course of the semester.

Class Communication
I'll expect everyone, including myself, to be civil and attentive during class time. This means listening attentively and refraining (always) from using your phone during class or using your laptop for non-class activities. During class discussions, you should feel free to disagree with me or your classmates—disagreement is a valuable part of academic life—but please make sure to do so in a polite and respectful way. In the rare case that a student repeatedly fails to be civil or attentive, he or she will be asked to leave class, resulting in an absence. This same rule of polite, respectful, and attentive communication applies to your interactions with myself and your classmates online, both in Reading Responses and via email. If you email me, the email should be appropriate to the genre and audience (i.e. an email to your professor). This doesn't mean your emails have to be overly formal,

but it does mean they shouldn't be written as if they were text messages to a friend. I'll try to respond to your email as soon as possible (during working hours), but if I don't respond, feel free to politely email me again. I get a lot of emails and sometimes, unfortunately, I let them slip through the cracks. This isn't a communication best practice. One last note: I'll communicate with the class as a group through Canvas and occasionally through your Rice email; make sure to check both of these daily.

Office Hours and Feedback
When you submit process rough drafts online, I'll read everyone's submission (or a sampling of the submissions, depending on how much time I have) and then offer general suggestions in class for areas that the class needs to address as a whole. If you want individual comments, you'll have a chance to meet with me to discuss your draft; these days are listed on the schedule and I'll provide a sign-up sheet outside of class. (You can contact to meet with me on other days as well, but these days are usually the ideal time for us to discuss your work). However, it's important to note that, because of time constraints, I'll never be able to read your rough drafts as closely as I'll read your final draft when I'm grading it. **Even if I provide comments on your drafts or look at your paper in a meeting, there are very likely still other areas that we haven't discussed that need to be addressed before the final draft.**

One final note: You should always feel free to meet with me to discuss any of your grades, but in the case of major essays, please wait until at least 24 hours after I've returned the work, so that you have time to read and reflect on my comments and the grade.

CWOVC
You're encouraged to make appointments with the peer consultants at the Center for Written, Oral, and Visual Communication for our course assignments. These consultants **do not** proofread or edit your work, but they **will** provide feedback on topics such as the organization of your paper or presentation, the coherence of your argument, appropriate sentence structure, and consistent grammatical errors. The Center is located on the second floor mezzanine of the Fondren library, and you can make an appointment at the Center's website: cwovc.rice.edu. The Center is open every day and includes some evening hours. Bring a hard copy of your essay and your assignment to your appointment. You may also make an appointment to practice oral presentations and/or to have a consultant review your slides. Make use of these resources.

Course Calendar
Particular details on this calendar may change as the semester goes on, depending on the circumstances of the course. If I change anything, I'll notify you well ahead of time. Unless otherwise noted, though, you are required to complete all of the work mentioned below by the due dates listed.

Week One – The Origins of the Medical Humanities
January 9: Syllabus review
January 11: Before class, read Pellegrino's "Educating the Humanist Physician: An Ancient Ideal Reconsidered" (*JAMA*) and submit diagnostic summary paragraph on Canvas
January 13: Before class, read introduction and chapter 1 of Graff and Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say* and submit RR

Week Two – Summarizing Research on Medical Humanities/Defining the Humanities

January 16: MLK Holiday; no class
January 18: Read "Simplicity" and "Clutter" (Zinsser, *How to Write Well*) and Cassell's "The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Medicine" (*New England Journal of Medicine*) and submit Paper #1 submit graded summary
January 20: Group presentation #1

Week Three – What are the humanities? How can they shed light on the practice of medicine?
January 23: Before class, read "Shitty First Drafts" and "Perfectionism" (Lamott, *Bird by Bird*) and Cole et al.'s "Introducing Medical Humanities" and submit rough draft of Essay #1 (letter)
January 25: Continue to work on Essay #1
January 27: No class; individual meetings and peer review

Week Four – Empathy, Audience, and Revision/Editing; Patient as Protagonist
January 30: Before class, submit new, "dress rehearsal" draft of Essay #1
February 1: Before class, submit Essay #1 final draft
February 3: Before class, read both prefaces of Frank's *The Wounded Storyteller* and submit RR

Week Five – Key Concepts from The Wounded Storyteller
February 6: During class, read Aronson's "Story as Evidence, Evidence as Story" (*JAMA*); optional group meetings with Professor Nixon outside of class
February 8: Group presentation #2
February 10: No class (Spring Recess)

Week Six – Literature, Medicine, and the Privacy of Suffering
February 13: Before class, read Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" and submit RR
February 15: Before class, read Chekhov's "Rothschild's Fiddle" and submit RR
February 17: Before class, read Saunders's "Tenth of December" and submit RR

Week Seven – Analyzing Patient-Provider Communication Through Literature
February 20: No class; read Munro's "Night" and submit RR
February 22: Before class, read Danticat's "Water Child" and submit RR
February 24: During class, read Hemingway's "Indian Camp"

Week Eight – Literature and Theory as Medical Humanities Lens
February 27: Before class, submit rough draft of Essay #2
March 1: Continue to work on Essay #2
March 3: Continue to work on Essay #2

Week Nine: Revising and Editing the Academic Essay
March 6: No class; individual meetings and peer review
March 8: Continue to revise/edit Essay #2
March 10: Submit final draft of Essay #2

March 13-17: Spring Break

Week Ten: Beginning and Endings: How Other Humanities Disciplines Shed Light on Medicine

March 20: Before class, read selections from the poetry of Sharon Olds and submit RR
March 22: Before class, watch Kurosawa's *Ikiru* and submit RR
March 24: Informal presentations on depictions of medicine in theater, art, photography, philosophy, religious texts, etc.

Week Eleven: Presenting on Medical Humanities Research
March 27: Email me prep work for your presentation
March 29: Presentations on scholarly source
March 31: Presentations on scholarly source

Week Twelve: Responding to Critics/Scholarly Research
April 3: Submit rough draft of Essay #3
April 5: Continue to revise Paper #3
April 7: No class; individual meetings and peer review

Week Thirteen: Quoting and Citation
April 10: Continue to revise Paper #3
April 12: Continue to revise/edit Paper #3
April 14: Submit final draft of Essay #3

Week Fourteen: Fiction and Creative Nonfiction
April 17: Before class, read Jamison's "The Empathy Exams" and submit RR
April 19: Before class, read Saunders's "Thank You, Esther Forbes" and Sullivan's "Feet in Smoke" and submit RR
April 21: Final review and informal presentations

By 5pm on the last day of finals: Submit final narrative reflection paper (and optional rewrites)